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ABSTRACT

Because Chile has experienced three different governments in ten years, it is a good country in which to examine the relationship between political tendencies and the educational system as measured by educational objectives and curricular activity. Even though the aspirations to democratize the educational system, to prepare students for work, and to decentralize and promote participation were objectives the three governments had in common, the fundamental principles and the measures proposed to achieve them were substantially different. (Author/IRT)

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN CHILE: THE RELATION BETWEEN POLITICAL TENDENCIES AND EDUCATIONAL GOALS

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INTRODUCTION.

In the past ten years, Chile has gone through a historical experience of swift changes, revealed in the national set-up by three different political tendencies.

In the first place, we must refer to the Christian Democrat Government, under the leadership of Eduardo Frei who took over in 1964. (1964-1970). Frei gave great importance to the organization and participation of the community, put emphasis on the industrialization of the country, the recovery of Chile's basic wealth, the Urban, Land, and Educational Reform and made a move towards Latinamerican integration. In 1970 Salvador Allende was elected president with the support of a coalition of left wing parties. They postulated a transition to a socialist society, basing their action on the participation of the workers' organizations and formulating an economic plan with strong state participation. Three years later (1973) there was a military coup that gave political power to a Junta. They have sponsored an economic plan based on an economy of "social market", giving great impulse to private initiative and having as main characteristics: a nationalistic platform and a powerful central authority.

The existence of these political tendencies, different, even divergent one from the other have made it possible for us to engage ourselves in a comparative study within the same country, as in these ten years certain patterns have appeared that introduce an ideological model different to the previous one, while at the same time they do not modify other factors present in the system.

Thus, one can rightly state that the cultural, po-

pulation, historical, geographical factors, as well as the idiosyncracy or basic resources have been much the same during these ten years. In any case, if our comparison involves two different countries the alterations suffered by these factors would be more evident than if we indulge in a comparative study circumscribing it to our own environment.

Therefor, it is necessary to note that in this case the relevance of a comparative study dwells in the possibility of grasping the total perspective of change.

Education inserted in a social context with these political tendencies is able to show diverse ways of looking at things. (1)

During the Educational Reform, started by Frei's government, it was stated that the educational system besides the development of the individual should contribute to the development of society. In a developing society, such as the Chilean one, education plays a vital role in the economic and social growth of the country because it is able to transmit cultural aspects and value systems that favour social change, because it is able to contribute to the preparation of the human resources, the leaders and technicians a society requires, and it is also able to promote social efficiency. (A. pag. 91)

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(1) The documents used will be the following, identified by the letter placed in front of them.
A.- For Frei's government: Leyton S. Mario "Educational Reform".
B.- For Allende's government. Unified National School. Ministery of Education.
C.- For the Junta's government: Educational Policies of the Government of Chile.

A somewhat different view was that held during Allende's government when "the strategic perspective that illumi nates the new educational policy presupposes the building of a socialist-humanistic society based on the development of productive forces, on overcoming technological and cultural dependency, on establishing new ways of ownership, on a true democracy and social justice guaranteed by the power in the hands of the people. (B. pag. 2)

For the Junta, "the aim of a society, which the individual is part of, is to provide the means so that each of its members can acquire full development as persons. That is why education must be understood as a heritage and as a task that concerns the nation as a whole, and it is the duty of the nation to train and prepare each man in the exercise of a respon sible freedom."

"The responsibility of being educators is shared in the first place, by parents in the family group, then by teachers, by government officials and by local authorities, in so far as the development of attitudes of discipline, work and study are dependent on them, and as far as these constitute the only possibilities to fulfill the aspirations of both men and com munities. (C. pa. 4-5)

Undoubtedly, the historical experience of such radical changes is not pertinent to Chile, only. What has happened in this country is just one of the many examples of the ins tablity of the Third World Nations. Though painful as it may be for many of us, it is the source of a great variety of comparative studies, which if rightly tackled could make people understand the roots of the problem and move them to collaborate in

order to better education for the good and welfare of our fellow men.

The problem we shall focuss is that of a comparative study in a country where significant political changes have ocurred in a short lapse of time. In order to proceed we shall limit our field of work to the connection there is between objectives and political tendencies.

If we think in terms which are strictly rational we could think that there is a direct relationship between political tendencies an educational objectives and between these and educational activities.

Because we have seen different political tendencies take shape we could formulate the following relations:

1.- The different political tendencies of the past ten years have generated educational systems which are different one from the other, and this difference can be obseved by looking at the educational objectives and curricular activity pertinent to each of the three political periods.
The partial relations are the following:

1.1.- The different political tendencies have produced educational objectives which are different one from the other, but they have generated curricular activity which is similar in the three political periods.

1.2.- The different political tendencies have produced educational objectives which are similar but they have generated curricular activity of a different character for each period.

In the first case there is a strong connection between the educational policy, the aims stated by the system and

educational action.

In the second case there is a relationship between political tendencies and objectives, wheras curricular action or activity is similar to, or independent from tendencies and objectives.

In the last case, the objectives are similar but the educational activity is not.

Let us analyse each of the relations mentioned.

a) If relations "1" were proved we would have to conclude that education appears as a feature integrated to political processes and that the weight carried by doctrine determines, on the one hand, the aims of education, and on the other, the educational activity reflected in the educational structure, in the plans and programmes, teacher student interaction, etc. If this relations were disproved we would have to think of education as something isolated, self-sufficient, where political tendencies have no place. This could lead us to say that:

a) Either the educational system is neutral in nature, or else
b) It has its own ideology and it has a cultural pattern of its own. If the latter were possible then once should have to ask oneself: What is this ideology?

If relations"1.1"were proved we would have to conclude that political tendencies as well as educational objectives are not the fundamentals on which curricular action is based. That is to say, that what happens in curricular activity is determined for example, by the weight of tradition rather than by declarations of principles and aims. The change of action does not operate, in these cases, through conceptual-ideological modifications.

If our last relations were proved this would indicate that the educational objectives, even though they do not suffer a change, do not play an important role in curricular activity. Curricular activity is modifiable, educational objectives are static. In other words, a political project is a self-sufficient tendency causing fundamental changes in educational action, but the political tendency is not reflected in the formulation of educational objectives.

To be able to prove these bypothesis we must establish some observable indicators, beside the characteristics of each of the political tendencies mentioned.

In connection with the variable: educational objectives, it will be necessary to go back to primary and secondary sources of information. The first, are the ones formed by the set of principles and the educational policies pertaining to each of the periods mentioned in previous pages. The secondary sources of information are to be found in the objectines stated at the level of plans and programmes, implicit in text-books used, in the system of evaluation, in the teaching methodology, etc.
It is worth mentioning that the objectives are stated in terms of quantitive fluctuations of the system (external efficiency).

In relation to curricular activity, the most significant indicators are:
The structure of the educational system, plans and programmes, teaching methodology, system of evaluation, text-book used, teacher-training system, etc.

The analysis could be undertaken within the system as a whole or at some level of the system. If the latter were done it would be possible to observe significant differences

between one level and another.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL TENDENCIES AND AIMS OF AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

This type of work does not allow us to make a comparative study that would provide answers for all the relations mentioned before. That is why we shall limit ourselves to only the first part: the direct relationship between the political tendencies and the objectives.

In connection with this line of thought it is interesting to observe if the different political tendencies in Chile have given birth to different educational objectives. Our starting point is the presumption that this has ocurred, and we say this taking into account that the moment one ponders about education one connects education to the image of man and the image of society, both ideas present in any political project.

To comply with what we are aiming at the first thing is to study the intentions present in the concept of education in each of the three governments and then to revise the objectives which appear to be the oustanding ones, (Democratization, preparation for work, participation and decentralization).

THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATION.

Social and economic factors justify the statement of each objective, but the objectives also respond to how the three governments have defined the concept of education.

For Frei's government education was supposed to

transmit culture by means of the different ways of communicating human experiences. Thus it tried to inculcate in every man a system of fundamental values, an awareness of freedom, of justice, of solidarity to the group, capacity to question his physical world, his past, present and future in quest for perfection and excellence. (A. pag. 100)

Because education implies cultural transmission it becomes an element of social cohesion (it is the cultural common groundwork that allows individuals and social groups to dialogue); it also provides social mobility (people get better training and preparation thanks to the educational process and it becomes a determinant factor of the social level they can reach).

In this sense education is a job for a lifetime, and a permanent adaptation to changes. This due to the fact that the continuity of learning is explained as a result of the natural tendency found in each human being to incorporate new knowledge and experiences as well as the need aroused by the rapidity with which science and technology multiply the quantity of knowledge. That is why the human resources, in charge of productive activity are obliged to a constant renewal. (A. pag. 103).

In Allende's government, people talk of education in terms of mass education, by the mass and for the mass. In a socialist society, the community organizes itself to assume as a group the responsibility to educate each and all of its members, while the traditional institutes where learning takes place, and which have maintained some kind of educational monopoly, expensive even for the governing minorities, slowly and gradually

suppress the hurdles that, separate them from community life, integrating themselves little by little. (B. pag. 2).

In this context what is interesting is "to develop in the students their skills, concepts, habits, opinions, attitudes and values that favour collective work, democratic life and social involvement, looking for the direct contact with the working class and its social and economic reality." (B. pag. 7).

Permanent education is therefore the only viable answer to the requirements of a society on its way to socialism, to a society that forms part of a world that advances rapidly into the twenty-first century. Formal education is left behind due to an aceelerated change in science and technology, and to social forms that renew themselves in very little time. In this way, permanent education is necessary as a continual rehabilitation of man in order to stimulate and participate in the social economic and cultural change. (B. pag. 2).

For the Junta's government "educability is an essentail quality of the spirit Thanks to it, it is possible to develop all the human potentialities, such as: intelligence, feeling, will power and human action; at the same time it facilitates what is unique in personal and social factors, in natural and cultural elements in order to develop man as a person, so that he does not lose his individuality nor what makes him universal and trascendent. (C. pag. 4)

It is also important to consider that society as a body guides, teaches, models, educates or miseducates its members. Thus a deliberate decision must be taken so that society educates in the best way possible and in the most efficient manner.

This takes us to situation in which we must keep in mind that those who teach or have an influence in the change of individual attitudes, must get together and decide on goals to develop actions - be they systematic or not. These goals must take into account the welfare of the people, and the actions must guarantee the historical national projects. (C. pag. 5).

Due to all this the educational policy of the state is nurtured by an education conceived as an activity which lasts for a lifetime in response to different aims, and develops in different ways according to the interests, aptitudes and age group of students. (C. pag. 8).

DEMOCRATIZATION.

In a country where large groups do not get complete schooling, the wish to promote actions that allow an access to a certain level of minimum education is desirable, and appears as one of the most relevant of all objectives.

In Frei's government a policy that could guarantee the opportunities to access, permanences and possibility to go all the way up in the educational system, with no limitations except the intellectual capacity of men, was proposed. (A. pag. 99).

For Allende's government it was important to promete an access to education of the majority of the nation so that the mass could enjoy culture and education and convert the right to education into a concrete realization. (B. pag. 6).

For the Junta's government this is defined in brief words: the aims is to offer a basic education to all, and

reduce the percentage of drop-outs. (C. pag. 12-13).

One can deduce that the three governments aim at democratizing education; the way they go about doing it is different because of the political ideology behind the stage.

In the first case, the objective of educational development stated, (education for all) could not be carried out without the assurance of equality of opportunities that characterizes a democratic system of education. (A. pag. 99).

In the second case the democratization of education is due to the fact there is a contradiction between, on the one hand, the promotion obtained by the working class through class struggle that means that the workers have gone up in the social ladder and obtained better standards of living, and on the other, a discriminative, unjust educational system that still denies the majority the access to education, or that offers a poor quality education. In the same way, the contradiction is present when the majority is fighting for a true democratic society so that power may rest in the hands of the people, while the educational system has been designed to reproduce a rigid class society and a system in which the minorities govern majorities and men are exploited by other men. (B. pag. 4).

In the third case one must understand that the present educational system is the product of an irrational historical development, a result of social demand and of a series of improvised policies in which a majority has not been able to receive the benefits of a complete basic education, a right everyone must be able to enjoy and which corresponds to the most elementary of social ethics. (C. pag. 12).

PREPARATION FOR WORK.

Another objective which cannot be put aside is that which has to do with the development of values, knowledge and skills necessary for the work that the active population of this country is engages in.

In Frei's government the kind of education needed for production, administration or trade was based on several years of general education. After that the students specialized in different aspects connected with the type of work chosen. (A. pag. 102).

During Allende's government what was more interesting was to give due appraisal to work that was socially useful, incorporating it both theoretically and practically in the training of the student; in this way it would contribute to a change of mentality: from the consumer's type to a more productive kind. (B. pag. 5).

In the government of the Military Junta the need to connect teaching to the functions the students will have to perform later on in life, is raised. (C. pag. 14).

If we tried to look at the underlying explanatory principles of these definitions we would find once more, different points of view.

In the first case, if the young people receive a solid general training that is handed down to them by the basic school, the educational system should offer in an always increasing number a varied gamut of tecnical-professional subjects and knowledge that would help these students to better their standards of living and at the same time provide the opportunity to cooperate

with the social and economic development of the country. The growth of economy is closely connected to the timely and efficient use of science and technology in the varied production processes. It is essential for the country to have well qualified staff at all levels to make good use of these factors. (A. pag. 101-102).

In the second place the starting point is the existing contradiction between the facts that a society aspires to develop its own culture on the basic of productive work as a way to self-realization and as a source of national wealth, and an education that looks down on work preferring it to consumption as a sign of prestige and social dignity. Likewise, the contradiction between the demands made on the quality of work of the workers, considered this as a basic condition to better the productivity of an economic system, and the educational system that does not rank productive work as it should, and does not offer any training in that respect. (B. pag. 4).

In the third case "graduate students show how unfit they are to enter the world of work, or to become useful members of a society. In order to achieve the objective formulated it is necessary to adopt a strategy, introducing changes in plans and programmes, in the evaluation system, in promotion, selection and in the strcture of the school system and the universities. (C. pag. 14).

PARTICIPATION AND DECENTRALIZATION.

In general, one has to establish certain aims in connection with decentralization, flexibility or participation, if one wants to fulfill the objectives stated by the educational system. This idea is present in the three political tendencies refered to constantly.

In Frei's government one often finds people supporting the following: "the representatives of the different social organizations that are interested in the educational process cannot be replaced by technicians, because the decisions that have to be taken in any process that projects itself into the future bounce back on those who have to do with the process. (A. pag. 62).

Therefore, in final decision making and at different levels of planning, all those who are directly connected to education ought to participate. (A. pag. 94).

This presupposes the introduction of substantial changes in the administration of the system in order to rationalize technical, executive and administrative activities together with the measures adopted to provide for more flexibility and decentralization. (A. pag. 111).

During Allende's government the Educational "Complejos" and the Complete School Units are planned organized and evaluated by technical committees formed by educational workers, community organizations, productive centers and the corresponding Normal School or University Faculty. (B. pag. 11).

This was meant to give the educational system the flexibility and the capacity to readapt itself in a dynamic and fast way which is essential to respond to the requirements of the process of building a new society; it was expected that there could be a demand of a permanent activity in so far as planning, evaluation and restatement of the different aspects of the educational process was concerned. (B. pag. 6).

For the Junta, the educational system must present

a constant renewal; this is understood as the real capacity it has to act according to the demands of the situation it has to fase, but bearing in mind what is expected from human destiny and from the society in which the individual lives. This renewal occurs due to a planned change that takes into account the opinions of those connected with education, a detailed realistic planning, a systematic research, an efficient way of executing orders, and exact evaluation of achieved objectives and the ample opportunities of all that the community offers us. (C. pag. 7-8).

The "Subsidiary State" is the one that must give an impluse to the initiative of private enterprises so that they can interfere in a gradual and direct way in education. These private enterprises must be supervised and have the support of the technical organizations of the Ministry of Education. (C. pag. 3).

SUMMARIZING:

The revision undertaken regarding objectives and the fundamental principles behind them allow us to state that there is a relationship between these and political tendencies.

We have not tried to pass judgement on these objectives. This would have obliges us to take a standing regarding education and if these objectives had been evaluated from the view point of any of the positions mentiones, we would have had to describe more fully the historical period responsible for such objectives.

It has not been our intention to do so; our aim was to show the aspirations of each regime and observe their behaviour according to postulates expressed by the different governments.

There are coincidences*, but in what is essential one can observe the weight carried by the political philosophy that inspires the political regime we have referred to. Frei's intentions of modernizing education, Allende's social humanism, the importance given to the individual in a Subsidiary State are elements that are present in educational action at official level.

Even though the aspirations to democratize the educational system, to prepare for work, to decentralize and promote participation are objectives in common for the three governments refered to, the fundamental principles and the measures proposed to achieve these are substantially different.

If this first experience is accepted, we would have to revise educational and curricular activity and see whether this coincides with the objectives stated. This would tell us up to what point action is the product of tradition or if ideological factors have a bearing on them, or else, analyse what elements are common to both.

In any case it is important to reaffirm that it is possible to undertake comparative studies within a country where significant political changes ocur in such short lapse of time. One could indulge in diacronic and syncronic analysis of the aspirations when faced with education to place critical factors that inhibit transformations and define if possible ways to modify them.

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* Many of these coincidence seem to come from statements that correspond to tendencies obseved in other countries or regions. It would be very interesting to study what influence Integral Planning, the Andres Bello agreement or the document "Learning to Be" might have, and see how some of the definitions reproduce certain aspects that surpass national possibilities.